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Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, Calif.

February 25, 2005

Exercise prepares PMO for crisis

Story by Lance Cpl. Skye Jones

MCAS Miramar Combat Correspondent

It's 4 a.m. and the air station's Provost Marshal's Office dispatchers just received a strange call.

"I'm going to kill my wife...she's having an affair," said a man with a shaky voice on the other end.

Following his chilling remarks, only a dead silence re-

At 9 a.m. the suspicious caller broke into the Marine Wing Support Squadron 373 complex where his enlisted wife works and took her hostage, along with her lover and five other co-

"I left my husband's house at 2 a.m.and went to my gunnery sergeant's house — I didn't want my husband to find out," said Sgt. Jennifer Gray, the suspect's wife. "When I got to work, my husband took my shop hostage."

When PMO and other outside agencies arrived on the scene Feb. 15, the daylong emergency hostage negotiation training began.

The exercise tested the first responder's incident management and hostage negotiation preparedness, as well as the employment readiness of the Special Reaction Team.

"If you don't train to mobilize people on a large scale level, you don't know how fast and proficient you can do it," said 1st Lt. Kate Hendricks, operations officer, PMO, Headquarters and Headquarters Squadron.

PMO dispatchers reacted quickly to the suspect's call and immediately recalled the SRT while notifying the Criminal Investigation Division and Naval Criminal Investigative Service. Miramar's fire department and ambulance service were also at

the site, along with the San Diego Police Department and the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

Upon arrival, first responders set up a perimeter around the suspect and attempted contact with him.

After the SRT delivered a special drop phone to the armed suspect, hostage negotiators made attempts to get him to come out and set the hostages free.

"The negotiation team is trying to make contact with the hostage taker to find out what he wants and to establish a rapport with him," said Master Sgt. Mike Stefanyshyn, CID chief. "We want to end this peacefully, without anyone getting hurt."

To help the negotiators do their job, CID gathered information on the suspect from his medical records and other sources. The records indicated that former staff sergeant Max Gray suffered from suicidal tendencies and was prescribed anti-depres-

"He didn't like the side effects of the pills so he stopped taking them," said Capt. Donald Tarbell, deputy provost marshal, PMO. "He was permitted to go back to work, but he was not allowed to handle any weapons."

While writing the information down, negotiators stayed in constant contact with the suspect.

"I don't think I'm going to be able to go on after this one. Think about your wife. You think you're going to be together forever and she betrays you like this," yelled Gray over the phone to the negotiators, while his wife and other hostages listened in fear. "You just don't get over something like that."

The negotiators tried to persuade Gray that everything was going to be all right when he abruptly slammed the phone down.

Eventually, negotiators convinced Gray to release the hostages one by one. Once a hostage came out of the building, the



Lance Cpl. Chris Holt, military policeman, Provost Marshal's Office, Headquarters and Headquarters Squadron, apprehends the suspect during emergency hostage negotiations training at Marine Corps Air Station Miramar Feb. 15. Photo by Lance Cpl. Skye Jones

snatch team proceeded to search and clear them, while the SRT ensured the area was safe.

"Every hostage has to be treated as a suspect," said

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Miramar Tax Center returns millions to servicemembers

Story by Pfc. James B. Hoke

MCAS Miramar Combat Correspondent

In only weeks of providing free tax services for servicemembers, retirees and their family members this tax season, the Miramar Tax Center has saved its customers approximately \$324,000 in filing fees and has produced more than \$3 million in tax refunds.

With more than a month remaining to file taxes, the tax center continues to provide outstanding service.

"We have currently a total refund amount of \$3.4 million," said Maj. Sarah T. Schaffer, officer-in-charge, Volunteer Income Tax Assistant Program Marine Corps Air Station Miramar. "I think we are definitely ahead of where we were at this time last year."

According to Schaffer, the tax center is

aiming to at least double the current amount of returns they have processed thus far by the end of the tax season.

"The total number of returns that we are targeting is about 5,000, but we are only at 1,955," said Schaffer. "It is really going to depend on whether or not we can get people in here to get their returns done for free."

To assist their mission and help get more people in for free tax services, the center is starting a special weekly promotion.

"From now until the end of March, we are going to have something called 'Tax Tuesdays'," said Schaffer. "We are going to really push on Tuesdays to get people in here. We are going to have free tax tips (for everyone) and free doughnuts for the first 50 clients on 'Tax Tuesdays'.

just returned from Iraq to come in and get their taxes done," she added. "They have extra time due to the combat extension (allowed to all military personnel deployed to war zones), but we are trying to get everybody to file while we are in full demand."

Shaffer partially attributes the massive totals of money the center has been able to save and have refunded to its customers to their new, more accessible location.

"So far, the value of services we have provided is \$324,000," said Schaffer. "That amount is a little bit higher than last year due to the new center and its size."

According to Schaffer, the millions of dollars in refunds earned for Miramar Tax Center patrons to this point wouldn't have been possible without the specialized train-

"My staff is extremely qualified," she said. "They have received two weeks of tax training; one week by the (Internal Revenue Service) and one by the California Franchise Tax Board.

"They've also had internal training," Schaffer added.

According to Cpl. Eric T. Crampsey, flight clearance specialist, Headquarters and Headquarters Squadron, Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, filing his taxes recently was an enjoyable experience, thanks to the Marines and Sailors working in the tax center.

"I have used (the tax center) since I joined the Marine Corps," said Crampsey. "It's fast, free and easy, and everyone there is friendly."

"I feel confident with the tax center doing my taxes," Crampsey concluded.

Inside

Weekend forecast from Miramar's weather station







74°/57° Sunday

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Uncommon remembered pg 4



Be ready, be safe, anywhere, any time

Story by Perry Lockhart

LIFELines

There is a need for every Marine, Sailor, and family member to be ready for anything, not to take safety for granted, and to ensure that all steps are taken to produce a safe environment at home, in the car, at work and on va-

Safety begins at home and with every member of the family. Dozens of Internet sites provide safety tips for almost every conceivable situation. Along with the articles on LIFELines, eSafety.com provides articles on safety for all members of the family.

The following tips for protecting young children at home are adapted from a brochure produced by the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission. The list is not all-inclusive, but is a good starting point:

Bedroom

- Put your baby to sleep on her back or side in a crib with a firm, flat mattress and no soft bedding under-
- Make sure your baby's crib is sturdy and has no loose or missing hardware.
- Never place your baby's crib or furniture near window blinds or curtain cords. This will prevent babies from strangling on the loop of the cord. To prevent falls, keep children away from windows.

Bathroom

- To prevent poisoning, keep medicines and cleaning products in containers with safety caps and locked away from children.
- Always check bath water temperature with your wrist or elbow before putting your baby in to prevent burns to a baby's delicate skin.
- Never leave your child alone in the bathtub or near any water, even for a moment. This will prevent children from drowning. Keep children away from all standing water, including water in toilets, 5-gallon buckets, and

- Don't leave your baby alone in a highchair; always use all safety straps. This will prevent injuries and deaths from the baby climbing out, falling or sliding under the tray. Be sure to use safety straps in strollers and baby
- Use your stove's back burners, and keep pot handles turned to the back of stove to prevent deaths and injuries from burns. Keep children away from tablecloths, so they can't pull down hot foods or liquids on themselves.
- Lock household cleaning products, knives, matches and plastic bags away from children. This will prevent poisonings, bleeding injuries, burns and suffoca-

Living Areas

- To prevent deaths and injuries from fire, install smoke detectors on each floor of your home, especially near sleeping areas. Change the batteries each year.
- Use safety gates to block stairways and safety plugs to cover electrical outlets. This will prevent injuries from falls and electric shocks.
- Keep all small objects, including tiny toys and balloons, away from young children to prevent choking and possible death.

In the Car

Ensuring automobile safety is another essential for a safe family. Some of the basics include:

- Always use safety belts and child restraint seats for infants and young children.
- Make sure the car is mechanically sound at all times. Check the brakes, lights, tires and transmission. Clean the windows and seat belts, and fix anything that is wrong.
- On long-distance drives, pack a first-aid kit, blankets, water, snacks and a flashlight.
- Schedule frequent rest stops and pull over if the driver gets tired.
 - Keep all doors locked and windows rolled up.

LANCE CPL. STEPHEN **BOSSERMAN** Legal Clerk

"I plan to pay off my bills and try to pull ahead of them"



Is this your Subaru?

lots. For more information, call 577-1276 or 577-4150.

The above vehicle is marked for impound by the Provost Marshal's Office. To avoid having the vehicle towed, please store it in the

Marine Corps Community Services or Traffic Management Office

MiramarkS

"What do you plan to do with your 2005 tax return?"

"I plan to pay my bills and spend it on mutual funds"



CPL. ANTONIO ZAVALABLANCO Supply Administration Clerk

"To be honest, I spent it already on a laptop computer."

Scam Targets Families of Servicemembers Killed in Action

American Forces Press Service

Defense Link

WASHINGTON — Officials with the Department of Homeland Security are warning the public about two new Iraq-related Internet scams, including one directed at the relatives of fallen U.S. soldiers.

"These new Internet fraud schemes are among the worst we have ever encountered," said Michael J. Garcia, assistant secretary of homeland security for immigration and customs enforcement. "Most troubling is the fact that some are targeting the relatives of U.S. soldiers killed in Iraq. We are also concerned about the fact that these criminals are impersonating (Immigration and Customs En-

forcement) agents and referring to ICE's official Web site in an effort to steal money from Americans who have lost loved ones."

One such scheme involves e-mail sent to relatives of U.S. soldiers killed in Iraq. Claiming to be a volunteer working with U.S. forces, the sender goes on to ask for assistance in obtaining funds kept for them by the deceased friend, promising more details when the relative responds to the e-mail. The sender then adds a link to the portion of Immigration and Customs Enforcement's actual Web site discussing ICE operations in Iraq.

The ICE Cyber Crimes Center in northern Virginia, in conjunction with the ICE Office of Professional Responsibility here, is investigating the schemes.



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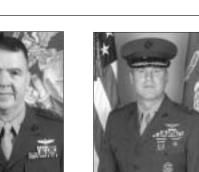
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News Flight Jacket February 25, 2005



The Italian-American display at the Miramar Commissary won the Italian and American Festival of Savings Award for the western Pacific region. This was the commissary's fourth consecutive win. For winning, Unilever, a consumer goods company, donated \$2,500 to the Fisher House Foundation to go toward supporting military children on station. *Photo courtesy of Marine Corps Air Station Miramar commissary*

Commissary's hard work pays off for everyone

Story by Lance Cpl. Skye Jones

MCAS Miramar Combat Correspondent

Commissary shoppers may have recently noticed large displays of food and other items strategically located throughout the store.

What shoppers may not know is that behind the scenes, the Miramar Commissary staff works extremely hard to set up each holiday, Super Bowl and other uniquely themed display to bring its patrons the best deals possible.

Recently, the commissary's Italian-American display received recognition for its design, originality and sales increase.

On behalf of the commissary, Robert S. Nagle, store director, and Jessica

Means, retail manager, accepted the 2004 Italian and American Festival of Savings Award Feb. 14 for their Italian-American exhibit, which was on display Aug. 16 through Sept. 30.

The exhibit displayed brand-name products, such as Ragu Spaghetti Sauce and Bertolli Olive Oil, at cheaper prices with Marine Corps posters, along with other American and Italian landmarks.

The commissary's display competed in the large store category against all of the commissaries in the western Pacific region. The victory was the fourth consecutive win for the commissary.

"It's one thing to win four years in a row, but to outdo yourself each year is really something," said Steve Pickens, region manager, Continental Division, Sarvis Inc. "It's people like Jessica and Lisa who continuously make it happen."

Means and Lisa Martinez, district manager, Continental Division, Sarvis Inc., worked together to ensure that the commissary had an award-winning display, even if that meant working 15-20 hour days on the project.

"We take a lot of pride in what we do and we're very competitive," said Means. "Everybody here works together. Camaraderie is not very common in other commissaries, but we have it here."

According to Martinez, despite the hard work, everyone benefits from the commissary displays.

"Everybody works hand-in-hand—the stores, customers and community," she said. "The customers get great prices, the stores get higher sales and we get the satisfaction of a good win."

The children on station benefit as well. Consumer goods company Unilever donated \$2,500 to the Fisher House Foundation, a supporter of military families. The foundation plans on donating that money to the Scholarships for Military Children Program.

"To me, the greatest thrill is not only knowing that we won this contest, but that we are providing great savings to our patrons while at the same time our company is donating thousands of dollars to a foundation such as Fisher House," said Martinez. "It is a win-win situation for everyone!"

HOSTAGE

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Lance Cpl. Phillip Rudd, military policeman and snatch team member. "Once we search him, we'll turn him over to the investigators and negotiators."

By the end of the day, PMO and other emergency responders successfully reacted to two different crisis scenarios. In the first scenario, Gray let his wife go and surrendered to authorities. In the second situation, Gray refused to come out, so the SRT broke into the building, apprehended Gray and evacuated the remaining role players from the building.

At approximately 3 p.m., the exercise ended and PMO and the rest of the participants in the event convened and discussed the importance of the training evolution.

Military policemen such as Rudd agreed that the exercise ensured everyone's capabilities were at a satisfactory level.

"This was a very tactical mission and it went well," said Rudd. "You have to train how you fight."

Iwo Jima revisited 60 years later

Story by Lance Cpl. Daniel J. Redding

MCB Camp Pendleton Combat Correspondent

MARINE CORPS BASE CAMP PENDLETON, Calif. — No more than eight square miles - a third of the size of Manhattan Island - nothing beyond a pinprick on the map of the world

Yet for 36 days in 1945, Iwo Jima was the focus of global attention during World War II - and a killing field for nearly 6,000 Marines in an epic battle that still defines the Corps 60 years later.

More than 71,000 Marines went ashore in the shadows of Mount Suribachi on Feb. 19 at 8:59 a.m. - none of them knowing that when the battle was over and the island was taken, 22 Marines would receive the Medal of Honor.

"We were the walking wounded," said retired Sgt. Maj. 'Iron Mike' Mervosh, who was with Company C, 1st Battalion, 24th Marine Regiment, 4th Marine Division. Mervosh, who is now 81, added, "We weren't afraid to die, but we all wanted to live."

Most of them didn't. Company C began the battle with 240 Marines. Thirty-six days later, after the island was conquered, only 31 were alive to tell about it - and half of those were "walking wounded," Mervosh said.

On that two-mile strip island, Marines had no place to hide as they fought their way up the mountain toward entrenched Japanese fighters. In the only battle of the war where the Marine Corps lost more fighters than the enemy, 17,372 Marines were wounded.

Air and naval gunfire proved nearly useless against the Japanese - who had spent years building tunnels and deep trenches in preparation to defend the island.

"It was the battle of battles," said Mervosh, part of the initial invasion wave. "From the day we landed to the day we left, it never let up. There will never be another battle like it."

When the dust had settled from the first day of engagement, the Marine Corps had suffered 500 casualties - a sign

of things to come. Ultimately, one-third of American forces that landed on the island were injured.

The Marines bore the brunt of the carnage in the early days. But there was no turning back.

"By damn it, we were Marines. That's what we are here for," Mervosh emphasized.

For 19-year-old Pvt. Jim Weiry, it was a bittersweet birthday in 1945, occurring in the midst of what was referred to as "hell on earth."

What mattered in the end, said Weiry, 78, was conquering the island.

"We landed there to take the island, and that was what we were going to do," said Weiry, who later became a first lieutenant with the 3rd Marine Division.

The battle continued the Marine Corps' drive across the Pacific Ocean, with the ultimate aim of reaching the Japanese mainland, explained Bob V. Akuilina, a historian with the Marine Corps Historical Center in Washington, D.C.

"Iwo Jima simply could not be bypassed, "Akuilina explained. Strategically, the island was important not for its size, but for its placement between mainland Japan and the U.S. Pacific forces.

Taking control of the island's three airstrips was crucial for American forces. The island proved a valuable launch pad for B-29 bombing raids over mainland Japan.

"By the time of the battle, the U.S. was able to bomb Japanese home islands. On return flights, however, the planes were disabled, were in dire need of fuel, or they were hit by Japanese fighters and damaged," Akuilina explained.

The island provided an emergency landing strip for the B-29s, allowing them to refuel or be repaired.

Moreover, taking Iwo Jima added the element of surprise to U.S. raids. Previously, Japanese forces on the island tipped off the mainland about impending U.S. raids, Akuilina said.

The island, considered home soil by the Japanese, was important to the soldiers protecting it from foreign control.

"The Japanese fought viciously on Iwo Jima, perhaps more so than any of the other islands," Akuilina said. "As the is-



A 37mm gun fires against cave positions on the north face of a volcano in support of Regimental Combat Team 28. During World War II, these light but extremely accurate weapons did some of their best work in the southern part of the island. *Photo by Official USMC Photo*

land belonged to them, the troops fought more personally than ever because it was their own soil."

"They knew they weren't getting off the island. Surrender wasn't an option, Weiry said. "I think they knew they were going to be dead."

But they weren't going easily. They even tried to get inside the Americans' heads.

Weiry remembered back to the cold nights in Iwo Jima foxholes, listening to Japanese soldiers whispering his name, over and over.

"They were tenacious," he said, recalling a battle that was predicted to last a mere 72 hours.

For many, it lasted a lifetime.

But the battle, though exhausting and costly, was part of Marine Corps destiny - a victorious legacy that cast the Corps in stone as perhaps the world's most vaunted warfighting organization.

A Marine Corps victory on Iwo Jima "was just a matter of time," Weiry said.

Society provides relief for Marines and Sailors

Story by Pfc. James B. Hoke

MCAS Miramar Combat Correspondent

The Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society has provided financial assistance to military personnel in need from both branches of service since its creation in 1904.

Often dispersing large sums of money in order to help assist in recovery from natural disasters or financial crisis, the society has come to the rescue of servicemembers in almost every clime and place.

In order to keep their funds at an adequate level in the case of an emergency, the society periodically conducts fund drives.

"The fund drives are to replenish the funds that are given out as grants and it gives us an opportunity to focus our attention on the military and what we can do for their people," said Ann W. Evans, director, Miramar NMCRS.

"The military runs the fund drive," she added. "We just provide background, advice and other financial information, but because of our position, we can't actively solicit funds."

Although the fund drive benefits the society, it also benefits the Marines and Sailors who make use of its services.

"The fund drive benefits (servicemembers) because it becomes part of the funds that we give and loan out as no-interest loans to them," said Evans. "It becomes the funds with which we provide financial assistance."

Lance Cpl. Genelle Rainville, tactical data systems repairer, Marine Tactical Air Command Squadron 38, Marine Air Control Group 38, 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing, was in an automobile accident in which her car insurance provider denied her claim, leaving her responsible for paying for expensive repairs to her vehicle.

"(The society) helped me get my car fixed because all of the (repair) money was needed at one time," said Rainville. "To even start (fixing) the car, more than half of the money for repairs was needed, which was over \$2,000. I didn't have it so (the society) helped me with it."

The society helped Rainville get her car back quickly, while avoiding any extra needless expenses.

"It was the cheapest and fastest way to get my car back," she said. "I would have had to wait until I saved the money otherwise, which would have been a long time, especially since I had to pay for a rental car."

In addition to helping when actual emergencies occur, the society also actively attempts to contact all members of the Navy and Marine Corps to inform them of their existence and capabilities.

"Our goal is 100 percent contact," said Col. Mike Brooker, assistant chief of staff, G-1, Marine Corps Air Bases Western Area. "This is so 100 percent of the Marines and Sailors stationed here at Miramar are contacted about the Navy Marine Corps Relief Society."

According to Brooker, approximately 44 percent of the people contacted last year actually donated funds to the society, a percentage that he seeks to improve dramatically.

Vews Flight Jacket February 25, 2005

Physical fitness a road worth travelling

Story by Pfc. James B. Hoke

MCAS Miramar Combat Correspondent

Physical fitness, unlike many things in life, isn't something that can be given. It is achieved. Though some may find it too challenging to spend time obtaining a quality level of fitness for themselves, not maintaining a healthy lifestyle normally leads to harmful physical results later in life.

Physical fitness is something everyone needs to be aware of, since too much exercise without proper rest increases chances for injury and too little exercise amplifies susceptibility to disease.

"Somebody who is physically fit can sustain an active heart rate or higher heart rate for at least 30 minutes at a time," said Julie Carlson, health promotion educator, Marine Corps Community Services, Marine Corps Air Station Miramar.

Although many have a basic understanding of what physical fitness is and how to achieve it, the majority of the American population still suffers from a lack of it.

"Sadly enough, most people are not physically fit," said

Carlson. "Almost 60 percent of our country is considered obese. Obesity usually comes with inactivity. Somebody that is usually physically active does not fall into this category."

The majority of people who are not physically fit fear the time and dedication associated with working out. According to Carlson however, becoming physically fit is not as hard as it may seem.

"It doesn't take as much as people think," she stated. "To become fit you need to do 30 minutes of activity most days of the week with different modes of activity, like running, biking and lifting.

"Also, it should be an intense 30 minutes," she added. "Your heart rate is up and you are sweating. It's not a walk in the park, there is a higher intensity level."

Marines like Sgt. Brandon J. Teppo, marksmanship instructor, Marksmanship Training Unit, Headquarters and Headquarters Squadron, who work out five days a week encourage other Marines to add physical fitness into their daily routine.

"I strive to be a better Marine by showing discipline, dedication and commitment (to my goals)," said Teppo. "Physical fitness is just one of the ways to do that."

Those seeking a healthy lifestyle should also be aware of injuries caused by too much physical activity.

"There are people that are considered 'over-exercisers," said Carlson. "If someone continues to exercise too much they could become injured. Physiology changes, such as an increase in heart rate and, in some cases, restlessness and (insomnia) are negative side-effects.

"Instead of improving your fitness you will actually start to go down," she added. "You'll notice that you aren't quite performing as well."

Carlson added that over-exercisers should take a slower approach to exercising at first so that they can learn their body's limitations.

"You have to know your own capabilities, your own boundaries," said Teppo. "Stay hydrated and use proper physical planning. If you keep trying to push yourself too far, you'll eventually end up hurting yourself."

Troops deployed in combat areas get tax credit options

Story by Gerry J. Gilmore

American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON – Servicemembers receiving federal tax exemptions for some or all of their military pay may now elect to apply for certain tax credit options, the chief of the Armed Forces Tax Council said Feb. 17.

Troops deployed to combat zones can now apply for tax refunds based on earned income tax credits, as well as additional child-tax credits, explained Army Lt. Col. Janet Fenton, the AFTC's executive director. The AFTC monitors and coordinates tax issues involving active and reserve-component military members.

The earned income credit, Fenton explained, primarily involves lower-income filers with children. The additional child tax credit, she added, may provide refunds for children under age 17.

Servicemembers who want to apply for the credit refunds are required to fill out and file a federal tax return, Fenton noted.

Enlisted troops serving in combat areas already have all of their military pay excluded from federal taxes, Fenton pointed out, while officers in combat zones can exclude up to \$6,529 of their monthly

Troops deployed to non-combat overseas areas have until June 15 to file their income taxes, Fenton said.

Troops serving in a combat zone, she pointed out, have up to 180 days to file their taxes after departing the area.

For example, "someone who is in Iraq right now," she noted, "would not have to file their 2004 tax return until they leave Iraq."

However, some overseas servicemembers would want to file early, Fenton said, because they may be due a refund. Military-operated tax centers at stateside and overseas locales, she noted, can provide servicemembers with tax filing assistance.

Married servicemembers deployed to combat and non-combat overseas locales can opt to have spouses file tax returns, she noted, provided there's an applicable power of attorney.



Against a desert sunset, a Helicopter Suspension Team from MEU Service Support Group 15 connects an external load to a CH-46E helicopter during external load training Feb. 21 in Udairi, Kuwait. The helicopter belongs to Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron 165 (REIN). *Photo by Gunnery Sgt. Robert Knoll*

15th MEU squadron trades flight deck for flight line

Story by Gunnery Sgt. Robert Knoll

15th MEU Combat Correspondent

UDAIRI RANGE, Kuwait — After conducting a massive humanitarian assistance operation and being at sea for more than two months, the 15th Marine Expeditionary Unit (Special Operations Capable)'s aviation combat element finally got to "spread their wings" over land in preparation for potential future combat operations.

The Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron 165 (REIN) is currently taking part in sustainment training in Kuwait to do "the kind of training you can't do over water," according to Maj. Jason Leighton, air officer, 15th MEU, and native of Minnetonka, Minn.

The squadron will spend approximately one month performing close air support missions, terrain flights also known as "TERF," door gunner live-fire exercises and external cargo lifts.

CAS, which is the process of attack aircraft firing at enemy targets on the ground, is being made more realistic by infantry Marines directly calling in fire missions to the pilots, according to Maj. Aaron Marx, future operations officer, 15th MEU, and native of Hammond, Ind. "We've been working since December to get the range time and work out our tactics, techniques and procedures."

The training is important to the squadron because they are the kind of missions the unit will be doing if they move forward, Leighton added. "They're training toward tactics they're going to use."

The AH-1W Super Cobra and UH-1N Huey helicopters provide the CAS for this

exercise, and while all pilots are getting flight time, the emphasis has been placed on training junior pilots.

"We're going out twice a day (and) the junior pilots are the training focus. They're the next flight leaders," Marx said.

Additionally, the Forward Air Controllers in Battalion Landing Team 1/1 are working with young noncommissioned officers and staff NCOs—training them to call in CAS missions to further increase their proficiency on the battlefield.

The ACE is also refreshing their pilots on TERF, where pilots fly at low altitudes to avoid radar and known enemy anti-aircraft gun positions. TERF is important because it gets the pilots comfortable flying at lower altitudes, which is something they haven't been able to do since the start of the deployment, Marx said. They are conducting this training during the day, and at night using night-vision goggles.

To share the benefits of this training, all CH-46E Sea Knight helicopters will head back to the ship after the first week to assume the responsibility of all sea-based missions.

This will allow the squadron to send their CH-53E Super Stallions here for the same training package. They will continue to trade out each week to ensure each detachment gets an equal amount of training time in the desert.

In addition to CH-46s and -53s, the squadron's Cobras and Hueys, will also be trading pilots and maintenance Marines during this training evolution to ensure adequate time on land while still keeping a significant presence on ship.

"The training plan is built around transition," Marx said. "It's nice to get off

the ship. The Marines joined the Marine Corps to go different places and do different things."

During this training evolution however, the ACE is still responsible for providing a capability to perform nearly any type of MEU mission from a Visit, Board, Search and Seizure to a direct-action raid, he added.

The other advantage of sharing the training time at Udairi is to have the opportunity to fly at high and low-level light conditions. As the lunar cycle changes, differences in moon light levels affects how the pilots see and navigate the terrain when wearing night-vision devices.

"Everything slows down at night," Marx said about how the pilots fly and navigate in low-light situations.

According to Marx, pilots use speed and altitude to mitigate threats during the day, but at night, they use the cover of darkness. Being proficient with night-vision devices helps the aircraft and pilot's survival in those conditions.

In addition to the TERF and door gunner live-fire exercises, the CH-46E pilots also brushed up on lifting external loads. Many of the pilots conducted some medium-sized external lifts during the MEU's humanitarian assistance missions in Indonesia so the need to be proficient is extremely apparent. Pilots and aircrews took their turns externally lifting pieces of concrete weighing nearly 2,000 pounds at the airfield here.

The squadron's CH-53E helicopters will conduct the same training during their stay at Udairi.

To make sure this training was possible, the squadron's maintenance Marines spent extra time conducting detailed inspections and other required functions before deploying to the field. "The birds are doing good," said Sgt. Armando Arvizu, 30, a CH-46E maintenance controller and native of Tucson, Ariz.

He said the Marines spent extra time working on the aircraft before this exercise to reduce the chances of the aircraft having issues in the field.

Gunnery Sgt. Jeffrey Whitlock echos Arvizu's feelings on aircraft readiness.

"As long as the birds are happy, we're happy because it means less work for us," he said. And unlike on ship where two separate maintenance crews work a day and night shift, the Marines at Camp Buehring work one long shift centered around the flight schedule, said Whitlock, 36, a maintenance administrative division chief and native of Greensville, S.C.

Whitlock has been addressing many of the troop welfare concerns and says that the squadron doesn't have it easy like some think

"A lot of people think we have it made, but we're still isolated," he said about their location of the flight line to the rest of the camp. Initially, their distance from the flight line posed a problem getting network services, but his work with the communications Marines solved the problem.

"They're pretty pleased with the base," Whitlock added. Marines aboard Camp Buehring have been enjoying a camp exchange, fast food, phone trailers and hostnation laundry services.

In addition to the ACE, the 15th MEUs other elements are conducting similar training at ranges throughout the base here, and all will have to prove their combat readiness before moving on to follow-on missions.



A Marine with Company E, 2nd Battalion, 5th Marine Regiment, 1st Marine Division, watches the street below him during a patrol. Over the past six months, the Marines and Sailors of Company E have witnessed the gradual evolution of Ramadi. *Photo by Lance Cpl. Graham Paulsgrove*

Marines improve safety, observe Ramadi evolve

Story by Lance Cpl. Graham Paulsgrove

1st Marine Division Combat Correspondent

FORWARD OPERATING BASE SNAKE PIT, Iraq — Incoming mortars, frequent firefights and improvised explosive devices have kept Ramadi citizens from having a peaceful home. However, the Marines of Company E continue to change that.

Over the past six months, the Marines and Sailors of Company E, 2nd Battalion, 5th Marine Regiment, 1st Marine Division, have witnessed the gradual evolution of the town of Ramadi. Once a city where insurgents ran rampant, Ramadi is now a place where a successful and safe future is visible on the horizon.

"This place is better off now than it was six months ago," said Capt. Eric J. Dougherty, commanding officer, Company E, 2/5. "Only a few months ago, shops were closed and kids

didn't go to school but now, that has all changed."

With the addition of an Army infantry unit to the city of Ramadi, the Marines and Sailors of 2/5 have had more time to concentrate on locating and dismantling the insurgent threat.

"When we got here, we were tasked out all over the place. Then, the Army took over one of the camps in the city. That was the biggest change for the better," said Dougherty. "We were not a constant presence in the city, but with a few changes, we went from staying alive to hunting the terrorists."

"Before, we had to run convoys through the city every day to give logistical support to our Marines, but the Army has different suppliers that come from a different direction."

Additionally, with fewer camps and outposts to guard, the Marines got more time on the streets.

"The Marines know every street in our part of the city," said Dougherty. "They walk them every day. We are hunting down the enemies, and at the same time, we are shaking hands

and making more progress with the good people of Ramadi."

During Operation Al Fajr, Ramadi was the recipient of increased terrorist activity and presented a defining moment for Ramadi's citizens to fight the terrorism.

"November was a big turning point for us," said Dougherty. "The Iraqis were fed up and soon began giving us very accurate information."

The vigilance of Ramadi's residents is not the only factor attributed to the city's improvement .

"Every day, our Marines go on patrol and have near daily contact with the same people. Every day, we are hunting down the bad guys to make this place safer."

"While they're not all willing to spill their guts, (the people of Ramadi) are a lot more willing to say hello and let their kids ask for candy," said Sgt. Travis S. Vankooten, platoon guide, Company E, 2/5.

Gale's virtue leaves lasting impression on Miramar

Story by Sgt. Kristen L. Tull

MCAS Miramar Combat Correspondent

"Great Escape was your dream, Sailors and Marines can get away. Love the games and movies too, Thanks to you it all came true."

The words written in a verse of the Bob Gale Birthday Cadence, dedicated to him by the Miramar Semper Fit staff on his 80th birthday, provide a brief glimpse of a Miramar icon.

If you have ever been to the station's main gym in the morning, you probably passed him. He's there every day or, quite possibly, on the golf course putting around. He's a spirited man who has dedicated his life to his country, but most of all, to this air station.

Gale, or Bob, as he prefers to be called, spent 22 years in the Navy.

"After bumping around for most of my juvenile years, I finally found the place where I belonged," said Bob.

Joining the military in 1940, his first assignment was aboard the USS Lexington as a cook.

"Pearl Harbor has been attacked by the Imperial Japanese Navy...this is not a drill," sounded an announcement in 1941 that made the then 20 year old grow up fast.

Bob advanced to the rating of repairman when the Lexington entered its final conflict, the Coral Sea Battle. When Japanese forces struck Gale's carrier during the engagement with both bombs and torpedoes, causing leaking aviation fuel aboard the vessel to explode an hour later, the Lexington had to be abandoned and torpedoed to prevent its capture.

"The word to abandon ship was passed verbally, as there was no power for the announcing system. I was really in no big rush to go over the side," joked Gale.

Without much choice, Bob slid down a rope into the warm Coral Sea, later to be picked up by the USS Minneapolis.

During his time in the Navy, Bob also served on the USS Belleau Wood, the USS Saint Paul, the USS Hamul and the USS Los Angeles. He went from the rank of Seaman to Lieutenant Commander, receiving the Presidential Unit Citation with a star, the Good Conduct Medal, the Asiatic-Pacific Campaign Medal with 11 stars, the European-African-Middle Eastern Campaign Medal, and the Philippine Liberation Medal with 2 stars.

His last assignment as the damage control assistant aboard

the USS Los Angeles proved to be his most memorable one.

"It meant a lot to me to have such a huge responsibility trusted in me," said Bob.

Bob's life progressed beautifully outside of the military too. Prior to joining the Navy, he met the love of his life, Carol, nicknamed "Beanie."

"I was smitten with Carol," Gale said, stating she was a "good looking dolly."

They were married in 1942, and in 57 years, became parents 3 times, grandparents 6 times and great grandparents 10 times.

Carol passed away in 1999 due to heart and vascular disease.

"She was truly a classy lady, who lit up a room by her very presence," said Bob.

Gale said she was a very special wife.

"She was very understanding and accepted my profession," said the Monterey, Calif., native.

During his time in the Navy, Bob developed a vision.

"I wanted a place for enlisted servicemembers to go while on liberty with little or no money," he said. "When I got liberty, I had two choices, stay and work, or roam the streets with no money."

He chuckled at his choice of roaming the streets.

"This is how the Great Escape came to be," said Ann Panattoni, semper fit director.

Ann met Bob for the first time in 1976 while he was working as a Recreation Services Director aboard what was then Naval Air Station, Miramar. His presence stuck with her until this day.

"He has such a unique style, and so much pride," said Ann, wiping her tears away, trying to think of the best words to describe a man, who in her heart, was like a father. "It meant the world to him to make a difference."

He later became Marine Corps Air Station Miramar's Morale, Welfare and Recreation director for Marine Corps Community Services, and during his 15 years of service, was responsible for building the Auto Hobby Shop, the Child Care Center, racquetball and tennis courts, and of course, his vision, the Great Escape.

The many activities he is responsible for pioneering at Miramar are just the tangible things Bob brought to fruition. To many, the person he is inside is the best gift he has and still gives to Miramar.

"Bob is the type of person that doesn't know a stranger," said D.J. McCluskey, social recreation director, MCCS.



Navy Lieutenant Bob Gale stands with the Takarotsuka Dancers, equivalent to our Rocketts in America, while the USS Los Angeles was moored in Nagoya, Japan in 1961. *Photo courtesy of Bob Gale*

"The one thing that impressed me so much about him was that he always remembered my name."

Bob attends religious services at the Miramar Chapel every Sunday. There, he developed yet another admirer, Gunnery Sgt. Cassandra Clark, staff noncommissioned officer-incharge, supply response division, Marine Aviation Logistics Squadron 16, Marine Aircraft Group 16, 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing.

"It started off just exchanging pleasantries, when Bob introduced himself, and our friendship has grown leaps and bounds from there," said Clark.

She was getting ready to deploy to Iraq, when Bob made her a part of his family by praying for her and conversing via e-mail.

"Something Bob shares with me is his concern for both my safety and the safety of the Marines under my charge," she said. "He has told me on several occasions that he salutes us for our loyalty and dedication. I would be remiss in my duties if I somehow failed to convey to this man, this hero, how his spirit and vigor have brought a smile to my face on many a day."

There's a lot of history and a lot of love behind this gentle man many servicemembers know, know of, or pass on a daily basis. He believes in what he's done and of what everyone on this base continues to do.

"Be 100 percent of what you can be. It's serious business in peacetime or wartime. A war can come upon you at a moment's notice, you must be ready," said Bob.

Bob believes the military would go broke, paying servicemembers what they were really worth.

"I feel right here about that," he says, pointing to his heart.

Sports Flight Jacket February 25, 2005

Iraq-deployed Marine ponders boxing future

Story by Sgt. Luis R. Agostini

1st FSSG Combat Correspondent

CAMP TAQADDUM, Iraq — Inside a makeshift weight room in western Iraq, Cpl. Terry Green walks over to the far end - the heavy end - of the dumbbell rack, rarely touched by most of the Marines, Soldiers and Sailors here.

He scans the rack and selects two 105-pound dumbbells, and prepares for a 10-rep bench press.

Like many of the servicemembers currently serving in Iraq, Green, an administrative clerk with the 1st Force Service Support Group, maintains a strength training program to improve his physical fitness. However, Green's weightlifting is improving more than just his pull-ups.

Before he deployed to Iraq in August 2004, the San Diegan vowed to keep his boxing skills sharp during his seven-month deployment.

Judging by some of the items in his seabag, one might think Green was ready to go twelve rounds with the enemy

when he deployed.

Some Marines pack reminders of home when they deploy, whether it be favorite books, movies or bed sheets. Green packed his boxing gear: three pairs of boxing gloves, two sets of protective headgear, a mouthpiece, hand wraps, a jump rope and focus mitts.

Green has been raised on hand-to-hand combat since his sixth birthday, when his father taught him his first combination of the basic punches - jabs, hooks and uppercuts. He registered with USA Boxing two years later, and has been fighting under the banner of the national governing body of Olympic-style boxing ever since.

"I loved (boxing) right away," said Green, who successfully completed a two-week leadership course in Iraq. "It was the first thing I learned from my dad."

Green, 20, who will return to his wife and two-year-old daughter in Camp Pendleton at the end of February, has reevaluated his priorities during his tour in Iraq, and is still trying to figure boxing into his life.

"It's really hard, but something has to give. I love boxing, but I love my family, the Marine Corps and the country we defend more," said Green.

Green says he'd love to open a boxing youth clinic in Southern California. Either way, he plans to stay involved in the sport one way or another by teaching the trade to others or competing inside a ring.

Boasting an impressive amateur record of 52 wins and 13 losses, the right-handed boxer continues to be a devout student of the game, increasing his strengths and recognizing his weaknesses as a boxer.

Green made it a practice to review footage of the matches and quickly identify his weaknesses and mistakes.

One of Green's more memorable losses - which he uses to fuel his drive to excel at the sport - was a bout against his former sparring partner, Paul Saxon, during a show in Los

See BOXER page 10

Shooterz shine against No Pay Due

Story by Pfc. James B. Hoke

MCAS Miramar Combat Correspondent

Headquarters and Headquarters Squadron's "No Pay Due" stepped onto the basketball court unprepared for the wrath of Marine Fighter Attack Training Squadron 101's "Shooterz" Feb. 10, falling 48-16 in an intramural hoops league blowout at the Miramar Sports Complex.

The Shooterz imposed their will on No Pay Due from the beginning of the game, running out to a 32-point advantage they wouldn't relinquish on their way to the team's second win of the

"I watched (No Pay Due) play before," said self-assured Shooterz coach, Staff Sgt. Oliver Cain, electrical technician, VMFAT-101, Marine Aircraft Group 11, 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing. "I was pretty confident that we would win."

With an aggressive defensive attack, the Shooterz capitalized on numerous No Pay Due mistakes by converting a plethora of steals, blocked shots and rebounds into points, which gave them a comfortable 29-2 cushion at halftime.

During the second and final period, No Pay Due showed brief flashes of life, scoring seven times their first half output, however their offensive outburst wasn't enough to make up for their weakness on defense.

In contrast, after recognizing the changes in No Pay Due's offensive plan, the Shooterz tightened down their defense, increasing their already substantial lead until the final buzzer.

"(The Shooterz) played better than I thought we would play," admitted Cain. "I'm normally a player and not the coach, but we played a good game."

Keeping No Pay Due's offense on lockdown nearly the entire game, the Shooterz tallied their second win of the season, increasing their record to 2-4.

Constantine takes moviegoers to hell and back

Review by Staff Sgt. Houston F. White Jr.

MCAS Miramar Combat Correspondent

Keanu Reeves makes his muchanticipated screen appearance as John Constantine, a character based on the popular "Hellblazer" comic book, who from birth was blessed and cursed with the paranormal ability to weed out "half-breed" demons and angels disguised in human form.

After failing to take his own life as a teen in an attempt to escape the neverending torture caused by his hellish revelations, Constantine finds himself consigned to the purgatory of the mortal realm (ironically, based in Los Angeles, "the city of angels") by the celestial powers that be.

As a result, Reeves is destined to patrol the border between heaven and hell until his impending death (lung cancer being the chief reason behind his imminent demise), hopeful that his demon-slaying deeds are sufficient to gain him entrance "upstairs."

In addition to being a chain-smoking alcoholic with charcoaled lungs darker than his gothic demeanor, the occult private investigator makes house calls, demonstrating his considerable devil-deporting abilities early in the film when he skillfully removes a demon from a young Mexican girl, ala Linda Blair in "The Exorcist."

After a battle with an entity made of

what seems to be swarming cockroaches in broad daylight, Constantine realizes that the rules of engagement agreed upon by God and Lucifer (Peter Stormare), are being violated on Earth and is determined to find out why.

Feature

Before long however, Constantine finds himself forming an alliance with a sultry female cop named Angela Dodson (Rachel Weisz), who needs his help to look into the strange circumstances surrounding the alleged suicide of her twin sister Isabel (also played by Weisz).

The resulting investigation leads the pair on an adventure that literally takes them to hell and back, forcing them to face off with more of hell's angels than a bike rally in Sturgis

Loaded with equal parts action, gore and spiritual imagery (often simultaneously), Constantine's two-hour duration runs its course at a steady pace, eventually bringing the main character mano y mano with the devil himself (whose wardrobe seems inspired by Detective James "Sonny" Crockett of "Miami Vice" fame) at the movie's climax.

As fans of Reeves might imagine, the conclusion of Constantine is somewhat reminiscent of his last screen encounter with Satan in the 1997 film "The Devil's Advocate" — which is to say that Warner Brothers Pictures wisely leaves the door wide open for this potential cash cow to



revisit us in the future.

An acidic mixture of "Matrix" hero Neo and demon-hunter Van Helsing, Reeves pulls off a credible performance in the role of John Constantine, a character seemingly created for his limited acting abilities.

Filled with a host of supernatural creatures and enough special effects to satisfy even the most hardcore science-fiction fans, Constantine is a film that manages to be simultaneously humorous,

creepy and thrilling, despite a bare-bones plot (essential for setting the stage for future Constantine installments) and a somewhat predictable ending.

While not approaching the epic status of other comic book-genre franchises such as the "Spiderman" or "X-Men" series, Constantine holds its own and is worth the price of the movie ticket and holy water you'll need to view this hell-raising flick.



Cpl. Terry Green, a 20-year-old native of San Diego and an administrative clerk with the 1st Force Service Support Group, kept his boxing skills sharp during his sixmonth deployment to Iraq, combining strength training with shadow boxing, sparring and road work. *Photo by Sgt. Luis R. Agostini*

BOXER continued from page 9

Angeles

"I was really outclassed," Green humbly said. "He's got skills."

"My weaknesses are lack of strength and focus, which I have been working on," said Green, who gained more than 20 pounds of muscle in Iraq thanks to a strict strength-training regime. "I've learned how to set small goals and go after them."

Even lessons learned during his two years as a Marine, such as discipline and time management, has helped him improve his boxing game.

"I've learned not to go all out in the beginning, take my time and have the discipline to stick to the basics of boxing," he said

Although he packed his boxing gear for Iraq, he didn't think he'd have either the time or atmosphere to sufficiently train.

"I thought it was gonna be hot as hell," he

said.

However, as the temperatures dipped to from 110 to 60 degrees in a matter of months, Green incorporated shadow boxing and sparring into his daily training routine, and eventually convinced base officials to grant him a boxing clinic aboard the camp last fall.

As a three-sport high school athlete in El Paso - he was a varsity starter in football, wrestling and track - a physically gifted 17-year-old Green decided to enlist in the Marine Corps, admitting that he lacked direction at the time of his decision.

Although committed to the defense of his country, it was his father and grandfather's background of Navy boxing that shed some light on a future of boxing in the military for the 6-foot-2-inch Marine.

"My dad had pure knowledge of the basics and the love of boxing," said Green.

Another man has influenced Green's boxing mentality -former world champion Muhammad Ali, who Green emulates from time to time.

"When it comes to boxing, you can't really afford to be completely humble," said Green, who will renew his registration with USA boxing upon his return to Camp Pendleton, Calif. "I have a tendency to talk trash."

A renewed confidence, along with 20 more pounds behind each punch, Green stuffs his boxing gear back into his seabag, ready to go home.

When asked how the added muscle will help him in the ring, he smiles slyly before joking, "I'm gonna break some faces."

Or maybe he wasn't kidding.

Miramar Movies

The Station Auditorium is located in building 2242, and will be featuring the following movies free of charge. Outside food and drinks are not permitted. For more information, contact 577-4143 or log on to www.mccsmiramar.com.

Friday:

4:30 p.m. Racing Stripes (PG)

6:30 p.m. Closer (R)

8:30 p.m. The Life Aquatic with Steve Zissou (R)

Saturday:

6:30 p.m. Racing Stripes (PG) 8:30 p.m. Beyond the Sea (PG-13)

Call for information 1 p.m.

6:30 p.m. The Life Aquatic with Steve Zissou (R)

6:30 p.m. In Good Company (PG-13)

Thursday:

1:00 p.m. Shark Tale (PG) 6:30 p.m. Racing Stripes (PG)

Post Office Relocation

The Miramar Post Office, located in Building 2257, will be closed due to remodeling for approximately 8-10 weeks beginning Monday, March 7. During this period, all financial transactions, which includes mailing parcels as well as purchasing stamps and money orders, will be conducted at a satellite location behind Bldg. 2257. For more information, call (858) 577-6058.

Religious Services

The Chaplain's Office is located in building 5632 and coordinates regularly-scheduled worship services. For the location and meeting schedules of religious activities, contact the Chaplain's Office at 577-1333.

Sunday:

9:30 a.m. Protestant worship service

11 a.m. Roman Catholic Eucharist

Wednesday:

7 p.m. Baptist service

Monday-Friday:

11:30 a.m. Roman Catholic daily mass

First Friday of the month MCRD 7 p.m. 7:30 p.m. Last Friday at Edson Range Chapel

Tax Center Assistance

The MCAS Miramar Income Tax Center is now available to help servicemembers prepare and electronically file their federal and state income taxes for free. Hours are 9 a.m to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday. For more information, call (858) 577-1040.

Intramural Volleyball

The Miramar Intramural Volleyball League will conduct a coaches meeting inside the Semper Fit Center conference room Wednesday at 11:30 a.m. League play officially begins March 9 at the Miramar Sports Complex, with games being held at 5:30 and 6:30 p.m. For more information, call (858) 577-1202 or visit www.mccsmiramar.com.

Sandtrap Restaurant

The Sandtrap Restaurant has been temporarily closed, pending repairs. The services, including breakfast, lunch and bar lounge operation, have been moved to the Enlisted Club. The Enlisted Club is now open to all patrons during breakfast and lunch.

ASVAB Testing Aboard MCAS Miramar

Due to a dramatically increased demand by Miramar personnel, the station Education Center will administer the ASVAB at Building 5305 Monday, Feb. 28 at 7:30 a.m. Examination results take approximately 3-4 weeks for delivery. For more information, call (858) 577-1801.

Impounded Vehicles

The following vehicles have been impounded and need to be claimed by the owners. Towing fees average \$113, storage fees \$28 daily. For more information contact the Provost Marshal's Office at 577-1461.

Vehicle:	License:	Vehicle:	License:
1995 Dodge Neon	CA/3KGZ374	1993 Plymoth Voyager	4HVP334
1989 Subaru GL	CA/1REE135	Unk. Mazda 626	CA/1STD385
Unk. Honda Prelude	No Plates No VIN	1993 Ford Escourt	CA/3EKK843
Red Sea King Boat	No Plates No ID	1998 Honda DX	CA/2YBS381
Hydra Sports Boat	FL/CZ39M	Unk. Honda Accord	GA/77693
Unk. VW Jetta	No Plates No VIN	1990 Ford Mustang	CA/2TAX992